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## **2009 ICE FEST TO FEATURE “ALICE IN COLDWATERLAND” CARVINGS !!**

Come January 31 beginning at 10 a.m., Downtown Coldwater will feature ice carvings all along West Chicago Street. Event organizers are hoping for cold weather, but no matter, the over thirty (30) blocks of ice will be cold and hard enough for master carvers John Merucci, Alex Dobrowolski, and David Kurth to create the fantasies using the characters from ***Alice in Wonderland*** along the streets in downtown Coldwater. This year the event will feature six larger carvings along with some smaller ones for all to enjoy.

Professional chef and ice sculptor John Merucci is the heart and soul of Icescapes, an ice sculpture business creating one of a kind hand crafted ice sculptures. John was fortunate to be raised in southeastern Michigan, a veritable ice sculptor's paradise, with some of the leading ice shows in the world close by. Educated at Schoolcraft College in culinary arts, John became interested in ice sculpting in 1986 while taking photos of the Plymouth Ice Spectacular in Plymouth, MI. Just a year later he was competing in the college division under the instruction of Ted Wakkar. From that point on John has competed, volunteered and displayed his work in many locations around the globe.

Alex Dobrowolski comes to us with extensive credentials. He has been the Executive Chef at the Gull Lake and Kalamazoo Country Clubs. Prior to the Gull Lake

Country Club, Alex was Executive Sous Chef at the Kalamazoo Country Club. Alex has been carving ice for over fourteen years and has created everything from swans, livestock, castles to intricate designs for special events. Alex has shown off his many talents throughout southern Michigan and Northern Indiana.

Coldwater is truly lucky to get the likes of ice carver David Kurth. David has competed in several competitions and holds 4 NICA Bronze medals. David has also competed at St. Joseph, Frankenmuth, and some other non-NICA competitions such as South Haven, Plymouth, Harrow, Ontario, and Ludington to name a few. David is an art teacher and ice carving is his passion as well as a hobby.

All participating Downtown Business Association members will be offering their customers a Deep Freeze on prices that day. Each business will be offering special sales on their merchandise.

Again this year there will be a Chili Tasting Competition featuring downtown restaurant/pubs. Get a card at Coldwater Executive Suites (28 W. Chicago) for only \$5 and visit 9 downtown establishments, taste their chili, select the best tasting and then fill out your name, address and telephone number and drop card back in box at Coldwater Executive Suites to be eligible to win a \$50 DBA gift certificate. All proceeds from the tasting will go to DBA special events.

Kids are not to be forgotten at this year's event. There will be lots for kids from ages 3 on up to do on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Education Station (42 W. Chicago) will have on-going hands-on activities between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. The Branch District Library Kids Room (3<sup>rd</sup> floor – 10 E. Chicago Street) will have a reading of "Alice in Wonderland" for all to enjoy beginning at 10:30 a.m. Taylor's Books and More will have a storytime beginning at 1 p.m. in the book store's lower level.

Arts Alive, the newly formed arts group for the Coldwater and Branch County area, will host “**Art On Chicago Street**” from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the eastern portion of the building now housing the Salvation Army (31 W. Chicago Street) next to Wilbur’s Furniture. Many area artists will be on hand to sell their one-of-a-kind art that is sure to be a hit.

Habitat for Humanity will be sponsoring a Soup and Potato Bar at the United Methodist Fellowship (26 Marshall) from noon until 2 p.m.

The 2009 Ice Fest would not be possible without the support of major sponsors. This year’s major sponsors are Michigan Gas Utilities, GCI, Charter Communications and Wal-Mart Distribution Center 6034.

Come to Downtown Coldwater Saturday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, and watch the master carvers create the area into a magical wonderland. You will not want to miss it.